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THE USE OF TEACHING TEAMS TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATION OF IN-MIGRANT, TRANSIENT PUPILS IN DEPRESSED AREAS. PROJECT PROPOSAL.

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS. PA.

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PROPOSED IS A PROJECT TO REORGANIZE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN FIVE DISADVANTAGED AREA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS SERVING IN-MIGRANT, TRANSIENT CHILDREN. IT IS BELIEVED THAT THESE STUDENTS WILL IMPROVE THEIR ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH, SOCIAL STUDIES, AND ARITHMETIC. NEW TEACHING METHODS WILL BE DEVELOPED, AND PARENTS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO PLACE A GREATER VALUE ON EDUCATION. THE PROJECT WILL ALSO OFFER AN INCENTIVE TO OUTSTANDING TEACHERS TO BECOME "MASTER" TEACHERS INSTEAD OF ADMINISTRATORS. TEACHING TEAMS, ORGANIZED ON THE PRIMARY, INTERMEDIATE, AND INTERSCHOOL LEVELS, WILL BE COMPOSED OF A LEADER, SEVERAL REGULAR TEACHERS, A PARAPROFESSIONAL, AND STUDENT TEACHER AIDES. OTHER PERSONNEL WILL INCLUDE A PROJECT DIRECTOR, SUPERVISORS, A PSYCHOLOGIST, CONSULTANTS, TUTORS, A SCHOOL-HOME LIAISON PERSON, AND EVENING SCHOOL STAFF FOR ADULT EDUCATION. THERE WILL ALSO BE TUTORIAL PLACEMENT FOR GIFTED STUDENTS, INTENSIVE REMEDIAL EFFORTS, AND GREATER STRESS ON ENGLISH FOR ALL STUDENTS. (NH)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Pittsburg Public Schools

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THE USE OF TEACHING TEAMS TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATION OF IN-MIGRANT, TRANSIENT PUPILS IN DEPRESSED AREAS

UD 005 732

THE PROPOSAL IN A NUTSHELL

The Pittsburgh project proposes to reorganize completely the learning environment in a cluster of five elementary schools whose attendance areas constitute a semi-isolated, depressed community. By developing new patterns of organization and new techniques of teaching, we expect to neutralize educational handicaps so that normal children can get normal benefits from what will probably come to be regarded as a normal educational program.

In order to avoid a business-as-usual, more-of-the-same approach to the array of special problems posed by the phenomenon of educational deprival, we propose to unlace the existing organizational rigidity typical of schools everywhere and to allow the latent creative ability of our teachers to exercise itself and develop. We shall do this by creating teaching teams, which will include "team mothers" from the community. Pupils will be assigned to teachers in groups of varying size for optimum periods of time.

The net result, we confidently believe, will be to (1) increase student achievement in English, social studies and arithmetic; (2) develop patterns of instruction for in-migrant children which are more effective than are now available; (3) encourage a greater appreciation of education among parents of these children than now exists and (4) provide an incentive for outstanding teachers to become "master" teachers rather than educational administrators.

We confidently expect the program to sustain itself in short order on a permanent basis. Whether this can be accomplished in as few as three years, it is now difficult to predict. By the end of the second year a fairly accurate judgment should be possible.

SOME EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Among the results anticipated from this project are the following:

1. An increase in student achievement in English, arithmetic and social studies.

2. The development of patterns of instruction for culturally different children which are more effective than are now available.

3. The encouragement of a greater appreciation of education among parents of culturally different children than now exists.

4. The provision of an incentive for outstanding teachers to become "master" teachers rather than educational administrators.

5. The development of procedures permitting a more accurate assessment of pupils' abilities.

6. The development of heightened educational aspirations among culturally different children.

7. A gradual lightening of the welfare load (To achieve this demonstrably would be a huge success).

8. A reduction in the effects of educational deprivation on children in the area covered by the project.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The Teaching Teams

Three kinds of teaching teams will be organized: primary, intermediate, and inter-school.

1. Primary teams will be established for each of the first three grades in each of the five schools. The distinctive feature of a team, leading to its flexibility, is the assignment of a large group of pupils to a group of teachers, rather than the allotment to each teacher of a fixed number of pupils. Teachers will be assigned to teams so as to strengthen and diversify the capabilities of each team. Pupils' assignments to teachers within the team will vary continuously, depending upon the program which has been worked out for the child and the requirements of each activity. The opportunity of scheduling hard-to-achieve small classes will be purchased anew every time a counterbalanci: way is found to teach another topic successfully to large groups.

2. Intermediate teams will be organized differently because Pittsburgh's intermediate grades are not organized in a self-contained plan. At the present time in the academic fields a language arts and social studies core is taught by one teacher to two groups, one in the morning and another during the afternoon. One or two teachers teach all of the arithmetic to the children in grades 4, 5, and 6, and the same type of scheduling is followed in science.

Therefore it is proposed that teaching teams akin to those established for the primary grades will be organized only for the language arts and social studies programs. In place of six teachers teaching twelve independent classes as described above, a team will be made of them to teach one half of the children during each half of the school day. All the fourth grades and the lower half of the fifth will probably be assigned to the team in the morning -- the sixth grades and the upper half of the fifth in the afternoon.

3. Inter-school teams will be of an entirely different sort. There will be only two, one consisting of all the intermediate grade teachers in arithmetic in all five schools, and the other in science. Not quite a team in the technical sense, still some interesting practices could be developed.

Provisions for the More Able

1. Gratis tutorial placement of highly talented pupils for an afternoon a week, or for a whole week, or on some other flexible basis.

Intensive Remedial Work

1. Via telecast and in groups of varying size.

2. In special reading and arithmetic groups for certain children for fairly long periods of time (up to six weeks) to the temporary exclusion of nearly all other subjects.

Increased Emphasis on English for All Students

1. Special stress on correctness in speaking

2. More attention to each student's progress in written work

3. Reading instruction in groups of varying size.

THE LOCALE OF THE PROJECT

The five elementary schools in which this project will be carried out - Letsche, McKelvy, Miller, Vann, and Weil - have a total enrollment of 4600 and are located close together in a blighted, semi-isolated area known as "The Hill," adjacent to the Golden Triangle and the lower hill redevelopment area where the new Civic Arena is being erected.

As strong a case as necessary can be made to establish the Hill as a depressed area, but the proof needs no belaboring. The Hill was chosen instead of other areas of the city, and all five schools of the middle hill are being included, for these reasons:

-- the five schools constitute a family both geographically and by virtue of a long history of close cooperation among the principals

-- pupils transfer from one Hill school to another in quick succession (one second-grader has transferred 16 times without once leaving the Hill)

-- the Hill community itself has a wholeness and a tradition of which these five schools are a part

-- the Urban League of Pittsburgh offered early this year to work with the public schools "toward the improvement of academic performance in schools in depressed areas with a high proportion of Negro student population."

-- welfare agencies and social service organizations are well established, are used intensively, and are very effective.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE PROJECT

The Teaching Personnel

Differentiation of competency, responsibility, and remuneration are fundamental team concepts. Although their compositions will vary, each team will include the following personnel:

1. The team leader, who will be a master teacher, recruited from another school if necessary, with authority and responsibility to supervise and direct all educational activities of the team members and of the pupils assigned to them. He will be paid 1.10 times his normal salary.

2. Several regular teachers with a variety of personal and professional backgrounds.

3. One team mother (or father, or grandfather) to perform para-professional tasks. Residents of the community selected for these positions should exhibit the personal qualities looked for in candidates for teacher training, except that they will be more mature. Their salaries will be in the clerical range.

4. One or two team assistants, unpaid student teachers from local colleges assigned for varying temporary periods.

Other Personnel of the Project

1. The Project Director, who will take complete charge and be responsible to the associate superintendent in charge of elementary schools. One of his essential functions will be to develop and maintain liaison with the Great Cities School Improvement Program coordinating body.

2. Two supervisors, one kindergarten-primary and the other intermediate, will be assigned to the five schools, making it possible for each supervisor to spend one full day in each school every week.

3. One psychologist charged primarily with improving the accuracy of assessments of potential ability. They will also test performance and refer for treatment children with emotional disturbances.

4. Consultants, including a sociologist who can provide project participants with intellectual insights into the local situation and its place in larger contexts.

5. Tutors for occasional placement without fee of talented pupils. Professional men in particular can extend horizons and impart important information to eager students who have sufficient maturity.

6. An additional home and school visitor to improve the effectiveness of home-school contacts concerning individual pupil problems.

7. Evening school teachers and a coordinator to conduct the adult education phase of the project, one evening a week in each school. All five schools are now closed at night.

Faculty and Staff Preparation

1. The first week, in late June. The program director, the two supervisors, and the five principals, plan the remainder of the training program.

2. The second week, in early July. The team leaders join the planning.

3. The third and fourth weeks, in late August. All participants plan and prepare together.

4. During 1960-61 all participants will be asked to donate their time on Saturdays for special conferences.

Channels of School-Community Rapprochement

1. Team mothers and fathers
2. Weekly evening telecasts
3. Tutorial placement of pupils
4. Adult evening school
5. College affiliations
6. Normal channels used more intensively

Activities Not to be Attempted

Welfare and social service agencies in the Hill are well financed and competently staffed. Considering their record of past cooperation with the schools it is quite likely that some of them might make special personnel and facilities available to assist in this project. For these reasons, and in accordance with the point of view expressed below, we shall expect to depend on existing community agencies to assume responsibility for:

1. Health and welfare activities
2. Social work
3. Delinquency prevention
4. Psychotherapy

Some Cultural Overtones

Just a few imaginative ideas, if carefully planned and elegantly executed, can accomplish a great deal:

1. Give each child a book every year, so he owns something of both actual and symbolic value. (To be purchased with funds donated locally.)

2. Form an all-Hill orchestra, a chorus, ensembles, dance groups.

3. Exhibit student art in adult galleries and then in schools.

4. Borrow and display fine art.

HYPOTHESIS TO BE TESTED

Certain assumptions and aspirations outline the logical basis for this proposal. With some confidence we believe that all of them are true. Indeed, in other contexts, most of them have already been proved. It is within the framework of educational disability that we believe they develop new significance.

During the course of the project data will be gathered, even if they can be only subjective, to test the truth of these propositions:

A. If the traditional organizational design in a group of schools is modified drastically, faculties will devise effective patterns of instruction that are new and ingenious.

B. If a school in a depressed neighborhood concentrates on improving its purely educational function and relies on existing social welfare agencies to perform their proper function, the investment in education will tend eithe: to decrease the resources required to sustain social welfare programs or to permit the support of broader services. (The reverse proposition is also true, but it is generally assumed by implication to be irreversible.)

C. Existing levels of aspiration can be lifted to a point where students will surprise themselves and others by their ability to achieve.

D. Incentives in the form of status, authority, responsibility, and salary will encourage leaders of teaching teams to remain teachers rather than seek administrative promotion, and will attract teachers of recognized competenc

E. Many successful features of this program can be transferred immediately without unusual expense to other areas of the city which have similar proble

TRANSITION TOWARD SELF SUPPORT

The amount of money deemed necessary to start this project properly will not be needed during the second year, and in each successive year less special financing will be necessary.

We confidently expect the program to sustain itself in short order on a permanent basis. Whether this can be accomplished in as few as three years, it is now difficult to predict. By the end of the second year a fairly accurate judgment should be possible.

SOME EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The sort of results anticipated from this project have been implied throughout the preceding pages. The most important ones are:

1. New and effective instructional patterns for the educationally deprived.

2. More accurate assessment of pupils' abilities brought about by more frequent teacher work with individual children.

3. Teaching more individually tailored to the learner

4. Heightened educational aspirations

5. Cumulatively less instead of cumulatively more negative effects from educational deprival

6. Higher achievement test results

7. More appreciation in the home for education

8. A gradually lightening welfare load. (To achieve this demonstrably would be a huge success.)

9. A renewed inclination for master teachers to remain teachers and not become administrators.

A POINT OF VIEW ABOUT APPROACH

If such a rapidly emerging and potentially engulfing problem as that presented by in-migrant, transient children in depressed urban areas is to be met with any hope of success, it must be either overwhelmed by a saturation attack or expertly cut down to size by a series of rifle shots, patiently planned and carefully aimed at the most vital targets.

Schools constantly face strong temptations, nobly grounded in the virtues of human sentiment, to dissipate their available resources in the temporary mitigation of grievous problems. But to yield predestines eventual disaster, because old problems recur and new ones arise more rapidly than our resources and our wits can solve current ones. We believe that we should use all our resources for an educational program which is rather carefully defined and which does not carry us out of our own field into social welfare, a field in which we are ill-equipped and ill-financed to function, and in which resources are more apt to be consumed than invested.

Only large, well-financed government agencies, assisted by the supreme efforts of local charities, could aspire to correct quickly the conditions which produce this educational problem. Once this premise is accepted, then it seems inevitable that a school district, approaching the problem with some hope of permanent, though limited, success, must admit that its resources of time and money and talent are not endless, and that it had better decide to look for appealing targets of manageable size.

Great Cities School Improvement Program

Pittsburgh Project

BUDGET FOR THE FIRST YEAR
REVISED
February 4, 1960

Item	Fund	School District	Community or Gratis	Total
Project Director	$ 13,000	$	$	$ 13,000
Supervisors (2)		19,000		19,000
Team Leaders (20 @ 10%	15,900			15,900
Team Mothers (20)	30,000	30,000		60,000
Psychologists (1)		9,000		9,000
Consultants	5,000		5,000	10,000
Tutors			X	X
Home and School Visitor		8,000		8,000
Evening School Coordinator	2,500			2,500
Evening School Teachers		2,000		2,000
Evening School Custodians		2,000		2,000
Substitute Teachers		5,000		5,000
Clerical service	10,000			10,000
Clerical supplies		2,000		2,000
1960 Summer planning	36,000			36,000
Two 1960-61 Saturday meetings			16,000	16,000
Field trips	6,000			6,000
Books to be given to pupils			10,000	10,000
Instructional materials		10,000		10,000
Television sets			5,000	5,000
Travel	10,000			10,000
TOTAL	$128,400	$87,000	$36,000	$251,400